Hello There!

We talked about the questions you need to ask before starting a project and now that we have to answers, where do we go from here? I mentioned at the start if this series that this wasn't a step by step guide and it really isn't but, I'm going to list off a few things that you'll want to accomplish once you've answered all those questions and then we can move on.

- Write your content and collect any media you think you want to use on your site (images, videos, PDF's, etc.

- Take your content and think of the most logical way to display it so it takes your customer on a journey in a thought out and meaningful way.

- Take that plan and create your wireframe - there are lots of examples online of wireframes but go to any site that you like and look at the menu, the first screen of information you see, the way the content is laid out and literally doodle it onto a page with boxes. Create your visual representation of where your collected content will live. You can write content to fit a space or create a space to fit your content. Trying to shove your content into a space is incredibly difficult. You know what you need to say, you shouldn't have to compromise.

- Platform Research - It's time to choose a platform for your website to live on. I am personally a big fan of Wordpress but I know it's not for everyone. Do you research and find the platform that will work best for you.

OK - So you have your content, your wireframe and your CMS platform. It's finally time to talk about branding and the look of your site. We are going to discuss what branding is and why it's important and what you can do to incorporate your brand into your site.

What is branding?

Business branding represents the idea on a whole of people's perception of a company. Branding from a design perspective is so many things but what colours and fonts to use and how to use them, different marks – such as little symbols, and your logo are justome examples. The way you build your brand will determine how everyone perceives your business and the products or services that you sell. Successful brands can influence the way people perceive a company's name, history, logo and advertising. In many cases, the brand is just as important as the quality and price of a product. When people buy a product, they are also buying into the lifestyle that the product represents.

If you create an exciting and memorable brand, your customers will recognize your products or services more easily and have a clear understanding of the value that the goods can add to their lives. Branding is also one of the most effective ways to gain the trust of your customers because it becomes something familiar and comfortable.

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But branding is far more that just the appearance of things, it's a cohesive plan to help you get and maintain business relationships. It's a calling card saying you care and it's in the fine details that can get you there.

There are rules to branding and when they are followed, it's like going for a car ride on a freshly paved road. Smooth and sleek. Bad branding is a golf cart ride on the moon.

People can tell that there is something completely amiss here and sometimes you're not even too sure why you don't like the look or feel of a company…you just don't.

When you look at a company and they have bad branding, it not only detracts from the overall company brand (obviously) but it even goes so far to give the appearance that the owner doesn't have it together or worse, doesn't care.

Sometimes there is too many typefaces being used in one application, their logo has nothing to do with what the company represents or the entire idea is just off somehow.

Let's make a new case study – This time it's a lawyers office. This is a very serious place of business. The branding for this kind of company should immediately say, trustworthy, professions and almost regal. Maybe black and gold, or deep reds with a moody grey.

Something that says "we take ourselves exactly as serious as we should." The typeface shouldn't be too severe but something with a serif that is a bit more formal.

That being said, now imagine that same lawyers office that has branding that should be on a party store. Bright (somewhat insane) colours, a balloony typeface and let's say, smiley faces instead of bullet points inside their documents.

This is, of course, an extreme example of what I'm talking about here but I think you get the idea. Branding can, and does (literally) form a business. Your identity in the world of business should be consistent, tasteful and uniquely you.

Hi! My name is...

Saying Hello, my name is Christine and I am the owner and creative director of OakTree Designs and my company is from Halifax, Nova Scotia….is too long and would start getting really annoying to everyone.

That's where your branding comes in. Building a brand is not something that you tell a graphic designer to just go and do. There is a process and I, the creative director and owner of OakTree Designs from Halifax, Nova Scotia is here to tell you all about it…annoying right?

Up Next...

The process for building your brand is a deeply personal one and requires another list of questions to ask your self which we will get to in our fifth and final instalment of web development from the ground up.

Until next time,
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